881 awaken the boys very early. They sing for one hour the Winter-bird. Then they learn the formulae for one or two hours. Afterwards the order : " Tshayi goma " is given and they throw away the leaves of the day before and put on a new " shondlo." They go and sit round the Elephant and stab him for two hours till a shout is heard : the women bringing the food announce that they have come. The boys eat for the first time, and sing again to help digestion. At the command : " Khedi goma," they smear their bodies with white clay. The sun is already high in the sky when they start for their hunting trip. They come back at sunset, eat for the second time, stab the Elephant again for one hour and at the command " Khwerere, Mayise, Mafefo," they go to their beds on the dirty soil of their hut.

c) Aggregation Rites.

1. *The Mulagaru.*

769 881 The first aggregation rite takes place many days before the conclusion of the school. One morning, very early, the men and the shepherds raise a very big pole in the yard of the formulae and fix it into a hole. At its extremity is a man, half hidden in white hair (1). The boys are awakened and led by the shepherds into the yard. They are told to lie down on their backs, all their heads turned towards the pole, which is called *mulagaru*, and to say : " Good morning, grandfather." Then a voice comes from the top of the pole and says : " I greet you, my grand-children." They must remain a long time in that position in the biting cold of the morning, talking with the " grand-father." They are allowed even to complain of their sufferings and to ask permission to return home. But they still have to stay some days in the sungi. Every morning this ceremony will be repeated. It clearly means that the boys are being put into communication with the ancestor who represents the clan, that they are beginning to be admitted to the adult life of the tribe.

(1) In some circumcision schools this man is called hokwana Masinde, a name which is applied to old women.

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585 girls, the stout women with strong arms, go and look for the
578 heroine of the day, who is hidden in a hut in one of the neighbouring villages, and who has not yet been seen. At last they succeed in finding her. She refuses to come. The viragos seize her and pull her out by force. Everybody assembles. She is covered with a large cloth which hides her from the gaze of the bystanders. Surrounded on all sides, she sets forward to the village, the crowd forming a kind of procession. " Let us accompany her, then we shall return home " sing the women who bring her. (A hi mu tjekeleni, hi ta muka). This song of the *tjeka*, the only one which is peculiar to the wedding day, is the prelude to a most strange duel.

The bridegroom's family stands on one side, that of the bride on the other, and then begins the exchange of equivocal compliments.

"Ha!" cry the groomsmen to the bride, "as you are becoming the wife of our brother and coming into our village, try and leave all your vices outside. Do not steal any longer! Forsake your bad ways and become a good girl! "

To this the bride's relatives shout in return :

" You have nothing to boast about! Stop wearying the people! She is far too good for you! Does not everybody know the wild pranks of your son and the dishonour of your family! "

And they go on in this way, at first in joke, but often speaking seriously. They sometimes even go so far as to bombard each other with the half digested matter which has been extracted from the goat's stomach, but, if anyone goes too far and exceeds the recognized limit of insult, the old people will tell him to be quiet.
585 These proceedings however are looked upon as a game and are
535 accompanied with a particular dance called *khana* which consists in jumping first on one leg and then on the other, gesticulating at the same time.

c) The religious act.

585 The procession reaches the hut of the bride's mother, where
782 the goat was killed. Mats are stretched outside. The bride and
769 groom sit down on the finest of these. It is now that the father

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1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

585 performs the religious rite (hahla). He takes between his first
782 finger and thumb a small quantity of the half digested grass which
769 has been taken from the paunch of the animal, makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue with it and emits a sound resembling " tsu "... as if he were slightly spitting. This is the customary sacramental act in most of the sacrifices. (See Part VI.) He stands behind the wedding pair and, looking straight in front of him towards them, speaks to the gods, that is to say to the spirits of his ancestors, and says : " My fathers, my grandfathers (he calls them by their names) look! To-day my child is leaving me. She enters the wedded life (bukatin). Look at her, accompany her where she will live. May she also found a village, may she have many children (mu nyikan timbeleko), may she be happy, good and just. May she be on good terms with those with whom she will be ". Here it may happen that a brother of the bridegroom will interrupt and say : " Yes, we will live peacefully with her if she does her duty well and does not worry her husband ". The old man goes on with his patriarchal prayer without taking any notice of the interruption and everybody listens quietly and attentively. This prayer which he pronounces with his eyes wide open and in a most natural manner is sometimes very long. When the people have had enough of it and wish him to stop, they send a young man to cut a piece of meat and to put it into the old man's mouth. Thus they " cut " his prayer and he keeps still. The person officiating must be the first to partake of the meat of the sacrifice.

f) The symbolical belt.

585 The astragalus (nhlolo) of the right leg of the sacrificed goat
777 has been carefully kept. All along the belly they cut a strip
825 of skin reaching as far as the neck and up to the chin, which is cut so as to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into this pocket and the father ties the belt around the waist of the young woman. He must not look at her face to face in doing this. On the contrary, she must turn her

764 761 would answer : " How can you propose such a thing to me ? Am I not immature (mbisi, properly raw) ? I am not yet ripe! Is defilement of death not there ? With whom could I wash it away ? " (Viguet). The first digger is also called " the one of the head, " the second, " the one of the feet, " because one of them will carry the corpse by the head, the other by the feet. Women may also bury a corpse upon occasion.

764 So the grave-diggers go back to the hut and begin to wrap the corpse in his rugs and in his mat (ku tjimba). They stitch the mat twice (to prevent it from slipping ?) (Viguet). They generally wait till sunset to perform the burial. When the time has come, they make a hole in the wall of the hut on the right side, as the husband dwells in the right half of the house, the wife in the left half. The corpse must not be carried out of the hut by the door, but by that artificial opening (1). So he leaves the hut head foremost (2). They sometimes stop up their noses with the leaves of a bush called ngupfana, which has a strong scent, in order not to perceive the smell of death (moya wa lifu). They march slowly, without a word, men and women following them silently. The " one of the head " goes down to the first level, 764 the one of the feet follows him. They have already put in the 778 place for the head a piece of wood, a piece of a branch of *nkanye*, 769 their sacred tree, one foot long and three inches broad, to be used as a pillow. At the bottom, on the soil, they stretch some old rugs. They lay the corpse down (3) on its left side, the head on the pillow. The grave has been dug in such a way that its long axis is directed towards that cardinal point whence the ancestors came, so that the deceased, having his head slightly

(1) In the Hlabi clans, the corpse is carried through the door, but the plaster on both sides of the door (marimba) is beaten and falls down. It will be repaired later on. In the Northern clans the hut of the deceased is not so strongly tabooed as amongst the Ba-Ronga. When it has been purified it will be used again.

(2) Comparative Ethnography : In Switzerland it is a common saying that a corpse must leave the house feet foremost.

764 513 (3) The Ba-Nguni place their dead in the grave in the sitting position, a knife in their hands, as they are a race of murderers! (Viguet). It may be that the reclining position given to the corpse by the Ba-Ronga, is the result of an evolution. At any rate, this is not the true sleeping position, as Natives generally do not bend their limbs when sleeping.

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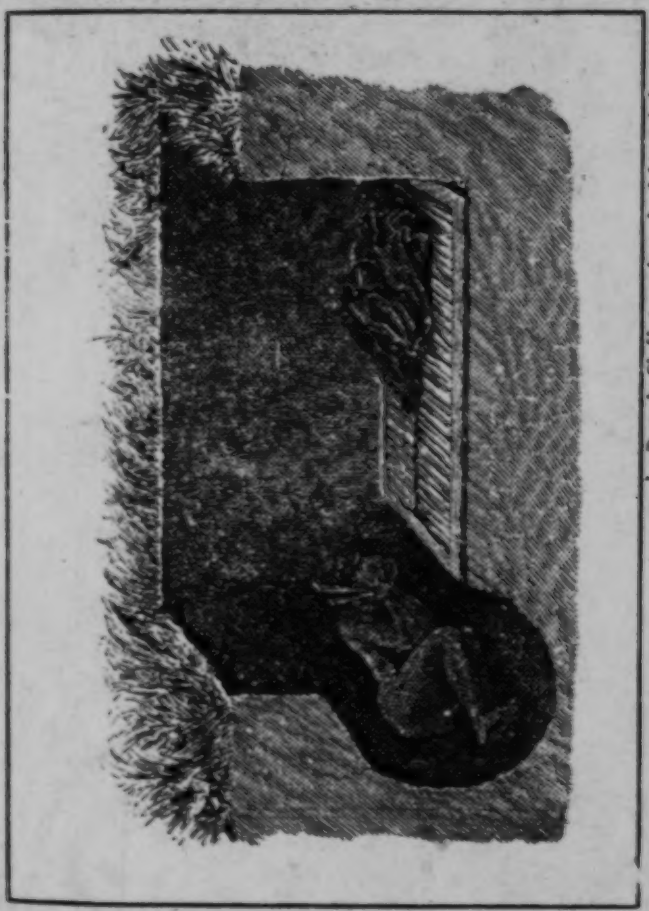
bent backwards, is intended to look in that direction (1). Now they take away from the deceased all those rugs in which they



A Ronga in his grave. Drawn by Cl. Huston and reproduced from « Anthropos ».

had wrapped him, and cut them through the middle with a knife, making a large opening in each of them as well as in the mats, also

(1) I attended on December 17th 1908, the burial of one of my neighbours at Rikatla, called Sokia, and described the rites which I witnessed that day in the paper already quoted, published by *Anthropos*, September 1910.

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764 *The second category* includes the articles which are preserved as having still some value ; they will be hung on the tree, or placed at the foot of the tree near the grave, or in front of the abandoned hut, and will be duly purified during the next few days, as we shall see. Good baskets, new pots, assagais (1), knives, hoes etc., belong to the second category. They will afterwards be distributed amongst

Drawn by Cl. Hentsch from a photo of H. A. Junod and reproduced from "Anthropos".

The grave of Sokis, a man of Rikatla.
(Sokis being an exorcist, a little hut has been built on his grave).

the heirs. In the Northern clans, seeds taken from the store of the deceased are sometimes also thrown into the grave with the words : "Go with your seeds."

764 But let us return to the burial. The "one of the head" officiates
769 in the grave ; then all the relations help him to fill the hole. They

(1) The blade but not the handle, which is included in his "filth" and which is broken. "The handle is *he*, the blade is not *he*."

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push the sandy soil with their hands. With great care they remove every piece of root, as if to make the sand perfectly clean. This is a taboo dictated by respect for the deceased. To do otherwise would mean "to throw him away" (tshukumeta). The head has been covered with a towel and the earth is brought near it very gently. Now the digger takes two twigs from the branch of a male nkanye (the nkanye is a dioecious vegetable) and puts them into the right hand of the deceased, which is seen emerging from the rugs near his cheek. When the earth reaches the level of this arm, the latter is stretched out slowly so as to cause the two twigs to emerge. This stretching process goes on as long as it is possible to draw the arm outwards, the hole being gradually filled in. When the arm is fully extended, the digger clutches (wutla) one of the twigs and gives it to one of his helpers, who keeps it; the second remains in the hand of the deceased. Such is, at any rate, the regular way of performing the *rite of the twig*. But often one twig only is put in the hand and it is taken away as soon as the earth reaches it, without any stretching out of the arm; or it is made to emerge from the sand by gently pulling all the time, till the grave is filled in, so that, when the tumulus is formed, the end of the twig is still to be seen. The younger brother will then take it to perform the religious rite. The twig is called the *mhamba*, a word which we translate generally by offering, but which designates any object by means of which men enter into relation with the spirits of the ancestors. The officiating person sits at the foot of the tumulus. All the people sit round the grave silently, the men nearer, the women farther off. He holds the twig with the right hand and turns it round his head, making circular figures in the air (1). Then he pronounces the sacramental syllable *Tsu, tsu, tsu*, two or three times, prolonging the sound; he has called the spirits. He prays: "You, my ancestors, who are assembled to day... Do you not see this? You have taken him. I am alone now. I am dead! I pray you, who are yonder (kolaho), as he has gone back to you, that

(1) This is the kind of sacrifice called *litsañwa*, explained in Part VI, Chap. II. Its aim is to secure a good reception for the deceased on the part of the psikwemba, viz. the ancestor gods.

764 769 we may remain in peace. He did not leave us in anger. Let us mourn him gently, in peace. Let us help each other to mourn him well, even our parents-in-law from amongst whom he has taken his wife." It may be that he forgets to say something which ought to be said ; then some of his hearers remind him quietly of the omission and he adds the words to his prayer.

764 *The wailing* (ku djila nkosi). As soon as he has finished praying, those present commence crying : the wailing begins. The women get to their feet and shout loudly, throwing themselves on the ground. The wife of the deceased cries more than any one else : "I remain alone in the lonely plain (libalen). Where have you gone? You have left me." The wailing generally starts on a very high note and finishes a little lower, expressing the pain of the heart in a touching, penetrating manner. Here is one of these sentences, which can hardly be called a song. I heard it in 1893 at the burial of a young woman who was found drowned in the lake of Rikatla.

O my mother ! O my mother ! You have left me, where have you gone? ! (1)

The parents-in-law lament over their daughter, the new widow. Everyone then begins to lament over his own relations who have recently died. The brothers weep together without shouting. They say : "You have gone first. We shall soon follow you, because there is attraction in death."

It is during the mourning that pots, handles of assagais, etc. are broken over the grave.

761 Let us stop a little while at this point.

783 765 We have seen enough already to observe that, for the Thongas, death (lifu) is not only a sad event, a great cause of pain on account of the bereavement, but a dreadful contaminating power which puts all objects and people in the neighbourhood of the deceased, all his relatives, even those dwelling far away, working in Johannesburg for instance, into a state of uncleanness. This uncleanness is very dangerous indeed. It kills, if not properly treated. All are not affected in the same way. There are concentric circles round the deceased : the widows are the

(1) See for the notes of this song Part V. Ch. III. B.

769 The bones of the dead are never disinterred. It is a taboo; grave is respected and women do not dare to till the ground over it. Often one comes across a small thick bush in the midst of mealie gardens, and one sees broken pots under the branches. It is an old grave. Later on, when no one remembers who has been buried there, agriculture regains its sway. If a bush fire has reached the sacred wood and damaged it, the person who lit it must atone by sacrificing a fowl in order to "quench" (timula) it.

REMARKS ABOUT DEATH AND BURIAL

761 These very complicated funeral rites of the Thongas clearly show the
783 existence of three great intuitions in their minds:

1) Man is immortal and becomes a god through death.

775 2) There is extreme danger attached to the defilement which accompanies death. This uncleanness contaminates the community and can only be removed by collective purification.

3) The social group, being diminished by death, must be reinforced by special means (family gatherings, choice of a successor, etc.). Hence three categories of rites: *religious*, *purificatory* and *social*.

On the other hand some of the rites we have described present unmistakably the character of *passage rites*, because death also means a passage: for the deceased, passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead; for his relations, passage from one phase of life to another.

764 Separation from terrestrial life is symbolised for the deceased by the
775 rite of piercing the wall of the hut in order to solemnise, as it were, his official departure from his former dwelling. I should consider also as a separation rite the custom of cutting through all his garments and mats, in order to make them "draw the last breath." To effect aggregation to the new world, the grave-diggers prepare for him an underground hut and square place, they place him in his new dwelling in a sitting position (if such is the true explanation of the folding of the limbs), they direct his eyes towards the cardinal point whence his
765 ancestors have come. I have sometimes had the impression that even
775 in these rites, the idea of a marginal period, or of a period of transition, was not lacking: the deceased is not prayed to prior to the great family gatherings, which take place three, six, or twelve months after the death. Then his hut is crushed or closed. It would seem that he has gone

607 his younger brother's wives (bengi) and play with those of his elder
835 brothers (tinamu). Why tis here this difference ? Because, as
we saw, the wife of an elder brother is a possible wife for all
595 his younger brothers, as they have the right of inheriting
592 her, should this man die. On the contrary, an elder brother inherits his younger brother's wife only under quite exceptional circumstances. One does not marry a ñwingi! This would be an insult to one's wife. Nsabula would leave Mboza if Mboza were to marry Magugu, Komatane's wife, because they have been accustomed to call each other ñwingi.

607 To a wife, her husband's elder sister is also a ñwingi (Ndjibari to Nsabula). The husband's younger sister is a namu or *nhombe*, and two tinamu have very free relations, just as in the case of the tinamu. This freedom exists between female tinamu as well as between tinamu of different sexes.

606 There is a final term to be mentioned : *bakhoti* or *bakhoti-kulobye*, in Ronga, *basevele* in Djonga, a reciprocal term by which the parents of a husband and wife call each other.

593 How far is a woman incorporated in her husband's family ?
769 She belongs to it till her death, provided the lobolo oxen have been paid, but she does not accept the ancestor-gods of her parents-in-law as being her gods. She keeps her own gods, and prayers are frequently addressed to them by her father or by her brothers in favour of her children. In this respect Thongas differ widely from the old Aryan peoples, where a woman had to adopt the religion of her husband's clan when she married.

* * *

606 Before leaving the subject of relations with parents-in-law, and in order to show to what extent the uneasiness and fear which characterises them are carried, I will briefly mention the taboos of the bukoñwana, which play such a great part in Bantu family life. Let me say that most of these taboos (psiyilayilana, small prohibitions), are not so severe as those connected with sexual relations, disease and death. It is not believed that a breach of

assagay. The batukulu dispose of the portion of the limbs offered to the gods. They *cut* the prayer and, at that moment they steal the meat or the beer of the sacrifice and run away with them. Why is this? "Because a ntukulu does not fear the saliva of his malume" (Mboza). They live in such intimacy with them that they can eat that which was reserved for the gods (1) (See p. 162).

The ntukulu *also takes precedence* in some other rites ; in the circumcision school the uterine nephew of the chief is at the head of the circumcised. In the *luma milomo* (page 146) he starts the purifying ceremony, and "gives to the others" (nyiketa) the use of the food of the deceased.

But it is especially in the question of the inheritance that he shows himself in his characteristic aspect. Father-right has set in and is strongly supported by the lobola custom. Therefore the sons of the deceased have the sole right to the property of their father, wives as well as implements. The batukulu, however, the uterine nephews, refuse to be left out! You will find them everywhere, trying to get something for themselves. They were already planning with the malume's wives to take them as spouses after the death of their husband. Remember how they teased the whole family, on the day of the distribution of the widows (page 208). When the implements were distributed, they came and claimed their *tjhumba* (a technical expression, it would seem, which means precisely this kind of claim lodged by a malume or a ntukulu). They were given the small assagay, the big one remaining for the son. In this way *ba nyiketa pfindla, they give over the inheritance to the legal heirs.* This is a most vivid representation of a right which no longer exists, having in fact become

(1) Some ethnographers have supposed that ancestral worship only began when the father took command of the family and consequently did not exist in the period of mother-right. This seems to me absolutely false. The spirits of the mother's family are invoked as well as the father's ancestors, and the special place of the uterine nephews in worship down to this day is best explained in this way: before the gods of the father were known and prayed to, those of the mother were worshipped, and consequently the batukulu held a special position in the ritual. When the ancestors on the father's side made their appearance in the Bantu Pantheon, beside those on the mother's side, or after the institution of father right, the batukulu preserved that special position.

keep serious and not laugh. Should they be unable to keep their countenances, their victory is lost!

But these games are only a preliminary. The farther we go, the nearer we get to true literature! Now they ask each other *riddles (psitekatekisa)*, simple and antiphonic. We shall study this form of folklore later on... If the second side is unable to give the right answer to the riddle, it asks permission to propose one in its turn and so the intellectual combat goes on until they have exhausted the series of riddles they know. Those who have had the worst of the duel must pay the forfeit by *telling tales (tha psihetana)*. A woman may be present who is a renowned story-teller and she holds the whole company under the charm of her tale for half an hour, perhaps longer... Children shudder when they hear the terrible story of the bogey man! They burst into laughter when she describes the funny tricks of the Hare, or of the frog *Shinana*. They heartily approve when the younger brother, despised by his elders, becomes their saviour and teaches them a good lesson... Thonga folk-lore is very rich; it is one of the most interesting manifestations of the psychic life of the tribe. We shall study it with the attention it deserves in Part V of this work. Here it is sufficient to show what a great and happy part it plays in the life of the village.

E. RULES OF POLITENESS AND HOSPITALITY.

The village life is dominated by the *respect for hierarchy*. I do not think this term is exaggerated. Etymologically hierarchy conveys not only a moral but a religious idea. This religious feeling is not absent in the fear felt by a younger brother for his elder, because the elder member of the family is its priest, the only possible intermediary between the family and its gods (See Part VI). So no wonder if, in their relations with each other, though these are extremely free and natural, Natives follow strict rules of etiquette.

"when the Ba-Khosa had emerged from the reed" (See Vol. II, Part VI, III). Nobody might see it except the chief, who kept it hidden somewhere in a hole amongst the rocks. His uterine nephew alone (ntukulu) knew the place, and when it was necessary to use it in order to pray to the deceased chiefs, the chief and his nephew alone were permitted to approach the hiding place ; those who accompanied them had to stop at a distance. This mhamba is lost. Even the chief Ntshongi, who was the paramount chief of the Ba-Khosa at the beginning of this century, had never seen it. It had been taken by his predecessor Mavabaze and had disappeared during the political troubles of the Gungunyana's war. Thus it is impossible to say of what it consisted, and this will probably never be known. There is no doubt however, that it was used for the same purpose as the mhamba of the Tembe and Shirindja. Its magical and religious power came from the fact that it was anointed with the "nsila" of the deceased chiefs. On the death of a chief, his "nsila" i. e. the layer of filth resting on his body, was taken away and the mhamba was rubbed with it. This gave the reigning chief the power to influence his ancestor-gods, in accordance with the magic principle : the part influences the whole. It is said that in former times the Khosa chief Shihanyisane having ill-treated his two younger brothers, Malashwane and Shalati, these two men succeeded in taking the chieftainship away from him with the aid of the Ñwamba clan. Eventually Shihanyisane made peace with his brothers and gave over the mhamba to Malashwane : a proof that this mysterious object was in truth considered as the most important attribute of chieftainship.

These regalia are not indeed very imposing to the eye. Thonga royalty had no brilliant insignia... But it had more than that! Each clan possessed a special medicine, whose magical virtues were greatly esteemed ; its possession made the chief invincible, the warriors invulnerable, the country unconquerable. This powerful charm is called *mbhulo* (Dj.), *mphulo* (Ro.).

Amongst the Nkunas, the mbhulo is called *Ñwantikalala*. It is kept by those belonging to the Mushwane house, and a man called Papalati is responsible for it. It consists of four calabashes, two male and two female (medicines are considered as having sex,

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which is not eaten, and rub their faces with it. But *no religious ceremony is performed.* It is the same for the *luma*, a paste made with the contents of the kwakwa fruit, a kind of Strychnos very similar to the nsala, but of a different taste. The ceremony was even more simple than with the almonds ; the chief used to send a little of this paste to each village saying : "Let this be the first bite you swallow : the new year has come!" (Luman, ku tlhese nguba.) No powder was used in connexion with it. The magical drug was used, on the other hand, when the luma of pumpkin leaves took place.

II. *The luma of the Kafir corn.*

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The great, the official luma, amongst the Ronga clans, is that performed for the Kafir corn (mabele). The great wife of the chief grinds the first grains of Kafir corn reaped in the fields. She cooks the flour in a pot and pours into it some of the royal powder kept in the calabash, so as to make a *shimhimbi* (See page 42). The chief takes a little of the food and offers it to the spirits of his ancestors, at the main entrance of the royal kraal. He prays to them in the following terms : "Here [illegible] the new year come! Precede us, you gods, and luma, so that, for us also, Kafir corn shall help our body, that we may become fat, not thin, that the witches may increase the corn, make it to be plentiful, so that, even if there is only a small field, big baskets may be filled! (Nguba hi yoleyi! Rangan ñwine, mi luma, ñwi Psikwembu! Na hine, mabele ma tjhama amirin yeru psinene, hi kuluka hi nga wondji. Abaloyi ba yandjisa, psi tala ngopfu, nambi shi shisiñwanyana shi shiñwe, a ku tale tingula!)"

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After this religious ceremony everyone luma in turn, the chief first, then the sub-chiefs, then the counsellors, then the warriors who have killed enemies in battle, then the headmen of the kraals who have all been summoned to the capital. Should one of the headmen be prevented from coming by illness, his younger brother will not precede him. He will bring him the *shimhimbi* in a leaf ; the elder will take it, and, after him, the other brothers. Women do not eat the magic powder. Neither do strangers,

643 754 787 789 and Part VI). — To protect and to prolong his life, diviners sometimes call together the whole clan in order to discover and eventually arrest those who might bewitch and kill the chief. This gathering is called *nyiwa* (See Part VI). — As for rain making, it is in the hands of the proper rain doctors (Nkuna) or is done by the ceremonies of *mbelele* (Part VI). — He is not held responsible for public calamities. — If his bodily or mental powers fail, the tinduna discuss matters in his stead and he is not deposed.

643 769 Chiefs are never worshipped during life time. After death, they are deified for their own family, who worship them, but not for their subjects. — They are not supposed to turn into wild beasts after their death. — The custom of appointing mock kings does not exist. Only on the death of a chief can one of his relatives be nominated to take his place, and watch over his property until the adjudication of the inheritance.

the ant-eater was sleeping. Attacked by the dog, the sambana 224
begins to burrow deeper into the earth; it reaches the spot where the hunter has dug his hole and tries to escape through this; but seeing that a man is waiting for it there, it suddenly turns back and returns to the opening of its burrow, where it is easily killed, notwithstanding the hard scales which cover its body.

Conclusion on the nuru idea and the lurulula rite.

I once asked old Makhani, the hunter who had suffered from an 775
attack of insanity because he had slain an enemy: "What is the nuru?" He burst out laughing, and this was the only answer I could get from him. I suppose an uneducated peasant of any European country would do the same if he were abruptly asked: "What is the soul?" An ethnologist, however, cannot rest satisfied with this avowal of ignorance or this utter want of interest. He must try to find an explanation, and some sort of an explanation is always likely to be found when we are dealing with beliefs which are not purely individual but which belong to a community.

The *nuru* (pl. miluru)—to sum up all the above accounts (see also I. 769
p. 478)—is a peculiar power possessed by man and by several wild 775
animals in virtue of which they avenge themselves on the person who 783
has killed them. This power resides in their body and appears to pass 825
out of it through their nostrils with their last breath. The fact of having killed a person or an animal *possessing the nuru* places the slayer in a state of dangerous contamination. It would sometimes appear as if the nuru had entered into him and remained sleeping in him, ready to awake in certain circumstances (I. p. 400). The danger connected with the nuru must be overcome by a special treatment; if this is not done, the nuru will cause an attack of madness and may even do great harm to the family of the slayer or hunter.

Let us try to go a step further in our analysis by putting the following 769
question: What is the relation between the *nuru* and the *shikwembu*, 775
first in relation to man, and secondly, as regards animals?

As regards man, we know that, for the Bantus, every human being at his death turns into a *shikwembu* and becomes an ancestor-god for his descendants and a hostile spirit as regards his former enemies. The shikwembu, roughly speaking, is the ghost of a deceased person. This

769 notion is clearly animistic. The shikwembu, as we shall see in the
775 VIth. Part, is a personal spirit to which prayers are addressed and offerings presented. The *nuru* is not personal. It is a power, an influence, a force of Nature. This is not a distinctly animistic idea. It belongs rather to the domain of Dynamism (See Part VI, Chapter I). Moreover any deceased person becomes a shikwembu, whilst the term nuru is used only in the case of a slain enemy, or in relation to strangers who died in a foreign country and were not properly buried. It is consequently clear that these two words nuru and shikwembu have not the same meaning ; they cannot be employed one for the other.

On the other hand there is a resemblance between the two ideas. Thongas believe that any shikwembu of a hostile tribe, and not only the shikwembu of an enemy slain in battle, can take possession of a man of their tribe and cause a disease very similar to that of the nuru at the outset (although it develops into something very different later on). This disease is a possession in the full sense of the word, and must be treated by exorcism, as we shall see in the Chapter on Possessions. Thus it is also clear that there is a similarity between the action of the nuru and of a hostile shikwembu. In the story told concerning slayers (I. p. 481, Note) we met with a typical case of nuru, ending in a sacrifice offered to the slain enemy. Undoubtedly the two ideas are connected, though not identical.

775 As regards wild beasts, the question does not arise, at least amongst
825 the Thongas. Despite the green snake found between the horns of the Kodoe, which my Maputju informant called its shikwembu, animals do not turn into shikwembu. They have only the nuru.

It would be interesting to know what the ideas of other Bantu tribes on the subject are, and I would urge students of African anthropology to inquire if the root *luru* exists in other Bantu languages and what its significance is. In his book on the *Ila-speaking people*, the Rev. Ed. W. Smith does not mention the exact corresponding term ; but he describes hunting rites which bear a close analogy to those we have met amongst the Thongas. I may mention specially the two following facts (Compare his Vol. I, p. 167 and II, p. 136). 1) When a hunter has killed an elephant and has "climbed" its body, a prayer is addressed to Leza, the Supreme Being, to the ancestral spirits (mizhimo) and to the ghost (muzhimo) of the deceased elephant. These are the words of this last prayer : "O spirit, have you no brothers and fathers who will come to be killed? Go and fetch them!" Here we meet with a tribe

to the sacrifice of the black victim and to the mbelele rite of purification of the land, which are characteristic Thonga customs, it seems that another old Thonga way of obtaining rain was the *tjeba fishing* which I described on p. 86. When the whole clan had gone to catch the barbels in the almost dried up ponds, a thunderstorm would come and rain would fall. This was especially the case with certain small lakes such as Malangotiba in Nondwane, and that in Nsime near Morakwen, because battles had taken place on their borders and the enemies' corpses had been thrown into the water. So these lakes had become "great sacred woods" (ntimu). I suppose the spirits of the deceased, which were certainly "gods of bitterness," (see next chapter), were supposed to prevent the rain, and the *tjeba* either appeased them or made them powerless.

To sum up this very complicated subject, I would say rain rites belong to three different categories: 1) The religious rites connected with ancestor worship (black offering, visit to the sacred woods, old songs and sometimes offering of a human victim). 2) Rites of purification of the land, those which are derived from the mysterious relations established between the power of Heaven and abnormal births (mbelele, cleaning of wells by women accompanied by the mother of twins); these present some features of the ordinary passage rites, either because the fall of rain inaugurates a new season, or because drought is a calamity comparable with death and attended with contamination. 3) The magic rites, in which sea charms play the most important part.

Hail, shihangu (Dj.), mabyana, lit. little stones (Ro.), is frequent in Thongaland; according to Mboza, it is not the object of any peculiar superstitions. Amongst the Pedis the day on which it has fallen must be kept as a sabbath. It is taboo to till the fields on that day.

IV. *The Inorganic World.*

Water is called *mati*, a noun of the bu-ma class, the class of liquids, employed only in the plural form. Notice the suffix *ti*, which seems to show that, at a period when mythological

193 conceptions were still current, it was considered as a feminine principle. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that *rivers* (nambu. pl. milambu) also have the feminine termination (I. p. 36, Note). I find the following names of rivers ending in *ti* : Nkomati, Nfoloti (Umbelosi), Ñwebeti, Shalati, Timbati ; the termination *etsi, edzi*, may be another form of the same suffix (Ñwanetsi, Ntsatsi, Shingwedzi, Madzi, etc.). A very curious fact, which shows the same conception, is that the river which crosses the territory of the Tembe clan is called Mi-Tembe. I first thought this to be a plural form of the mu-mi class ; but it is more natural to explain this *mi* as the feminine prefix (1) which means daughter of, as Migogwe, etc. (I. p. 352).

823 784 824 789 133 *Crossing rivers* is subject to a curious rule. It is taboo to bathe in the stream before crossing it ; taboo also for the traveller to cook his food on the hither side of the river ; he must first cross, and then take his meal. This rule is still universally observed by waggon trekkers in South Africa. In this case there may be a reason for the taboo : South African rivers are apt to be swollen in a moment by sudden rain, and the crossing made impossible for days : the traveller therefore makes haste ; he will have plenty of time to stop on the other side! When the river is dangerous, a Thonga will first chew (phora) a little of his *ndjao*, the root of a juncus, which is supposed to increase courage and to ensure victory over hostile influences. (See Part VI.)

823 769 776 782 Some *Lakes* and *Rivers* are believed to be inhabited by spirits, but not in the ordinary fetichistic way, in which a special spiritual being is incorporated with the natural object ; these spirits are *psikwembo*, spirits of the deceased ancestors of the owners of the land, and are propitiated by their descendants. Should another clan have invaded the territory where these lakes are, and crocodiles threaten the fishermen, (p. 88) they will call some one belonging to the clan of the old possessors of the country and ask him to make an offering to appease *his* gods. This is the ordinary course, and the more closely we search the more completely these lake and

(1) A number of river names have the prefix *li* or *ri*, especially those which are of Sutho origin : Lebvubye. Ritabi (Letaba) Ritshindjele (Letsitele), Rimbelule (Lepelule, Olifant). Others begin with *ñwa, mu*, and may be ancient names of men.

river spirits become identified with ancestor-gods. In my investigations I found one case, however, where a special spirit, a kind of Nature spirit seemed to be invoked. This was on the sea shore, in the northern part of Nondwane, at a place called Mahilane, where there are two great rocks on the beach. When the great waves dash against them, with a fearful roar, people go and sacrifice (hahla); they pray thus: "Tsu! Oh sea! Let vessels be wrecked, and steamers also, and let their riches come to us and help us." In former times, a young girl was sometimes exposed there as a prey, or an offering to the power of Mahilane. Now this is exactly what is done in the sacred woods for the ancestor gods and, in fact, Mboza asserts that: "When abandoning the girl, the officiant says: You, Psikwembo, ancestor-gods, drive on the sea that it may wreck vessels."

When urged to speak with more precision, my informant answered: "Mahilane and the sea are one and the same thing (ntshumu muñwe). When the sea is roaring people exclaim: 'Mahilane roars'! Near the island of Shefin, where two branches of the Nkomati river meet in the estuary, people say: 'Makaneta is roaring'. Here it is Makaneta and no longer Mahilane."

This information is extremely interesting. As regards Makaneta, we know him perfectly well; he is the ancestor of Mboza and descendant of Mazwaya (I. p. 360). This ancestor-god begins to be confused with a natural phenomenon taking place in the country where he lived. The religious fear of the spirit of the deceased mingles with the awe inspired by the roaring of the sea to such an extent that both notions coincide in the imagination of the savage. We here note the exact point where *an ancestral spirit evolves into a Nature spirit*, and this instance proves, in the clearest possible manner, that the conception of the ancestor spirit preceded that of the Nature spirit. Here, at any rate, Ancestrolatry is anterior to both Fetichism and Naturism. These later forms of the belief can be easily accounted for by the development of Ancestrolatry: the reverse process would be much more difficult to explain.

The sea, with its immensity and its wonderful power, deeply impresses the Thongas dwelling near it. They do not however tell many stories about it, nor did I hear of any explanation

When travelling through the country, you may come across a tree round which a rag has been tied, evidently for some religious purpose. One's first idea would be that this tree is worshipped, but this is by no means the case. The tree is probably that which the divinatory bones have singled out as the one around which the village should be built, and the offering of this rag is made to the spirits of the ancestors, exactly as is done when the rag is placed near the grave, or at the door of the little hut built on it, in the case of those possessed. (See I. p. 141 and later on Chapter III). The tree is only sacred on account of this association. I have sometimes called the *Nkanye* a sacred tree, and the Thongas call it the king of trees, but it is not so in itself, or in virtue of any Nature spirit dwelling in it ; anybody can cut it without transgressing a taboo ; it is venerated because it provides the tribe with the national beer, and because its branches are used as pillows for the dead and its twigs as *mhamba* in the funeral service (I. p. 138). The religious and social *luma*, to which the bukanyi is subject (I. p. 397), is observed from fear of the ancestral spirits and not because the tree itself is in any way worshipped. In fact I never met with any worship offered to a plant as such.

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VI. *The Animal World.*

Plants, *psimili or psa-ku-mila*, things which grow (ku mila), are distinguished from animals, called *psibandjana*, or *psihari*, which are said to *kula*, become great, and not *mila*.

815 136 826

The knowledge possessed by the Thongas with regard to animals is extensive. They give names to all the larger ones, especially, of course, to those which are eaten, but also to some which are smaller, insignificant and useless.

The *Annelida* are called by the generic name of *tinyokana*, diminutive of *nyoka* (yin-tin), snake ; leeches, *ntjundju* (mumi) ; lumbrics, *nshikwa* (yin-tin), both those living in the earth and parasites in the intestines of children.

Amongst *Myriapoda* the Julideae are called *Khongoloti* (dji-ma) ; the Millepedes, *Ndlandlalati* (yin-tin). When one of these has stung a Native, you will see him swallow a little earth, and a

815 mouthful of water after it, to prevent swelling. "The milleped
136 will die at once and you will not suffer much, because you have
825 been wiser than it (u yi rangelile butlharin)."

The same precaution is taken with regard to Scorpions, *shiphame* (Dj.), *mubalane* (Ro.). Other Arachnida are Spiders (*pume* (dji-ma) *ripe* (dji-ma), Ticks *(shikalana)*, and the Itch *(shinwayana)*, which Thongas know but too well without being aware that it is caused by a microscopic animal. To this group probably belongs the *maroda*, a parasite met with in the huts of Bilen and other remote parts of the country, whose bite causes actual disease.

The *insect world*, so richly represented in Tropical countries (1) is pretty well known, though many of its representatives are of no practical use to the Natives.

Orthoptera. Acridius peregrinus, the locust which ravages the fields, is called *humbi* (yin-tin) in Ronga and *ndjiya* (yin-tin) in Djonga. (See p. 81). The first "clouds" which appeared greatly impressed the Natives when they were seen at the beginning of the war of 1894. I heard some one say that this phenomenon had been foretold by a "mulungwana," a little man fallen from heaven to announce this calamity which threatened the land. (See next Chapter). Other Acridians are called *mhera* (yin-tin); the larvae of locusts, which abound at certain times in the gardens, are the *hondje* (yin-tin). The Pamphygus, a fat, heavy, grey locust, the female apterous, are called *phuphu* (dji-ma). The Grillus is *Shiyendhwa* (shi- pai), and is eaten by some. But the best known Orthoptera are those of the Mantidae family whose representatives are numerous in the country. They are called *Ñwambyevu* (Dj.) or *Ñwambyevulane* (Ro.), viz., the one which cuts the hair, probably on account of its claws, which move like
825 scissors. This insect plays a great part in the superstitions of the
769 Bushmen, who worship it. Amongst the Thongas there is a similar custom; young shepherds, when they meet with a Mantis,

(1) See my publications on the Entomology of Delagoa Bay; I. *Coleoptera*, in collaboration with Dr. Bugnion; II *Orthoptera*, by Dr. A. von Schulthess Rechberg; III *Hemiptera* by Prof. Montandon in the "Bulletin de la Société vaudoise des Sciences Naturelles." XXV, p. 132-220; IV), *Lepidoptera*, "Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise des Sciences Naturelles" Tome XXVII, p. 177-250.

tear out a little hair from the skins of their belt and offer it to the insect saying : "Take, Grandfather!" They say that in old times they were looked on as gods (psikwembu), or rather emissaries of the ancestor-gods, just like the little green snakes (Chapter II) ; their name was Mahulwahulwane, and when one of them entered a hut, no one interfered with it, as it was thought that perhaps some god had come to pay a visit to his descendants. These ideas regarding Mantidae seem to be now disappearing and the offering made to them is merely a little children's game. Another Orthoptera is the *Shipfalapfapfa*, an onomatopoeia, describing a flying locust, and the *Shishirikoko*, a large species which emits saliva through its thorax. When it flies the Thongas say to it : "Go to the place where people eat meat!"

Hemiptera. Bugs are well, too well, known in Thongaland, having taken up their abode in most of the huts, where they are tolerated. They are called *Nsiketi* (yin-tin) and the wild bugs *Nsiketi ya nhoba*, bug of the bush. Lice, *Nhwala* (yin-tin), are regarded as vermin, and often as the result of bewitchment, especially when seen swarming on children. Many Aphidae (grubs) cause an exudation on certain shrubs, a kind of wax, the *Mabodi*, which is used for the manufacture of the black crowns (I, p. 130) ; others are called *Shibungubungu*, the red ones, probably a kind of cochineal.

Neuroptera. Diptera. The equivalent of these names of flies is *Nhongana* (yin-tin). Mosquitoes are called *Busuna* and fleas *Batseka*, with the prefix *bu* which here means a collection, a great number. *Bavokoti*, a similar word, designates ants. The big gad-flies are the *Bawa* (dji-ma). The Libellulidae are called *Mungutane* (mu-ba) and the Termitideae *Muhlwa* (mu-mi).

Lepidoptera. Butterflies and moths are designated by a single word, *Phaphalati* (Dj. Notice the feminine suffix), or *Phaphatane* (Ro.) (dji-ma), and their caterpillars by the term *Hukwa* (yin-tin) or *Tomane* (dji-ma), this last word especially applying to the large Saturnidae caterpillars which are eaten by the Natives (p. 80). The relation between the caterpillar and the butterfly is not generally known ; only once did I find a boy who knew that a certain white cocoon, used as an ornament in dances (p. 102) gave

825 *Shipyahla* (Ro.), *Mhiri* (yin-tin, Dj.) is the big, lazy, grey puff adder,
136 which creeps along the ground, and is one of the most venomous kinds, together with the *Mhamba* (yin-tin), a slender species, very swift and often found on trees. "When you meet a mhiri," say the Nkunas, "throw a little earth on it and you will soon see
[752] its brother!" Of course magicians have plenty of drugs to cure snake bites. For this purpose they use the head of the adder roasted and pulverised. *Shibatlankombe*, (Naja nigricollis), "the one which carves a spoon" is the name of a species which
[762] curves its neck till it looks like a spoon. The *Hhlaru* (yin-tin) is the boa. It is eaten. Another member of the Clapidae family is the *Likure*, a pretty greyish violet species (Causus Lichtensteinii).
[769] Amongst the harmless snakes are those little blue ones, *Shihundje* (Dendrophis subcarinatus), which are considered as emissaries of the ancestor spirits. I shall mention them again later on. The *Nsoma* (yin-tin), very common and harmless, is probably Dispholidus typus. Some small ones, not larger than worms, but hard and shining like metal, are called *Tumbi-tumbi*, because they hide (tumba) in the sand. One of them seems to be Xenocalamus bicolor.

825 There are also the legendary snakes of the Thongas. On the
777 Coast they speak of the *Buwumati*, which dwells in the lakes and is invisible. It is only heard crying "bu-wu-bu-wu" when rain is falling, and its voice is as loud as that of an antelope. If it shows itself to a traveller, it is a very bad sign. The story is told of a man who came back from consulting a bone-thrower. He saw the buwumati lying on the ground, its coils extending to a great distance, closing all the passages. He retraced his steps, but after three days he died. In the Transvaal, this dreadful snake is called *Shimhemhemhe*, the name being an imitation of its cry.
825 This superstition is perhaps of Pedi origin, but it has been accepted by the Nkunas. The shimhemhembe dwells in certain dark woody ravines on the slopes of the Drakensberg mountains. If anyone imprudently penetrates there, the snake pursues him, creeping along the branches above, and bites him on the top of the head. A man met with it once on the way to Thabina; he saw it on the road, its head raised, a shining head of two colours. There

lightning), or animistic (Son-of-the-Moth). But they are not of much importance. They belong to the same category as the description given by the Psalmist of the sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, or to that of Homer comparing the break of the day to a young damsel with rosy fingers. This is poetry, mere personification of natural objects, or forces, and not beliefs. The poetical tendency is very marked amongst primitive races. It may be that ideas of this kind were more firmly held in former times, if the tribe has really passed through a more mythological phase, a hypothesis for which there are some grounds.

2) Collective beliefs.

The beliefs of the Thongas which deserve to be called by that name because they are universal and express themselves in important rites and customs, are the following :

1. The human soul continues its existence after death, when it is endowed with new powers which make it an object of awe and fear. *The spirits of the ancestors* are the main objects of religious worship. They form the principal category of spirits (psikwembu).

2. Although the spirits of the departed generally have nothing to do with people other than their descendants, some of them, especially *those belonging to foreign tribes*, can take possession of living men and cause troubles which must be cured by a process of exorcism. This is the second category of spirits.

3. Some individuals have the power of magically unsheathing themselves during the night, and their spirit goes out to torment, or to kill and eat other people. These are *the wizards* (baloyi) ; this third category of spirits accomplish their wicked deeds when separated from the body, but their body is still living and they re-enter it. These three beliefs are distinctly animistic.

4. There is in man, and in a few large animals, a semi-spiritual principle, the *nuru*, which escapes from the body when the individual is killed in war, or in hunting, and through which the dead man, or animal, avenges himself or itself on the murderer. What is the relation between the nuru and the shadow (sitjhuti)? This is not stated. The nuru seems to be of a more material nature, as it can enter a root, and it remains attached to the corpse and the bones of the person or animal killed. This category of spiritual enemies, probably invented under the influence of fear and remorse, has no connection with ordinary people,

771 easy to perceive. In the quartz of the South African veldt, miners, in their investigations, sometimes strike a reef : they crush the hard stone, wash it, apply to it certain chemical tests and find there is gold in the reef. This is similar to an experience which I once had when conversing with Thonga natives. Quite unexpectedly I heard them speaking of *Heaven*, not as a kind of impersonal being, but as a king, endowed with great power and omniscience, who must be feared by thieves, because he knows them. Persevering in my inquiries, I discovered this second set of religious intuitions, quite distinct from the first, viz., the *Deistic Conception of Heaven*. I intend now to describe these two parts of the Thonga religious system. Later on we may discuss their relation to each other. "System" is perhaps too big a word, for no Native philosopher or theologian has ever classified this somewhat confused mass of religious ideas, and we must not look for anything logical and organic. We may even meet with contradictions, conflicting statements... While trying to bring some order into the subject, I will endeavour at the same time to give a faithful and reverent explanation of Native ideas.[1]

A. ANCESTROLATRY.

1. *The Ancestor-Gods (Psikwembu).*

1) The name of the ancestor-gods.

769 776 193 Any man who has departed this earthly life, becomes a *shikwembu*, a god. We shall show, later on, that to translate "shikwembu" by god (with a small "g") is by no means incorrect. The word is indeed interesting, but unhappily no light is thrown on it by etymology. It belongs to the shi-psi class, the class of instruments. Take the verb "famba" to walk ; put the prefix "shi" in front of it, and change the final "a" into "o" and you obtain "shifambo" — "the thing with which one walks!" So shikwembu would mean "the thing with which one *kwemba*." Only this

[1] [For complete discussion of Thonga religion, see pp. 372-450, Category 116.-- Analyst]

stem *kwemba* is never used, and its meaning is unknown. There is another form, *nkwembu*, of the class mu-mi, very rarely used, and having the same meaning, and the word *bukwembu*, the abstract noun derived from the same root. Bukwembu is the "power which creates life and death, which gives riches, or which makes poor," says Viguet. In Pedi the ancestor-gods are called *badimo*, a word which seems to be related to *Khedimo* (above, in heaven). But I have heard this connection doubted (1). In Zulu the etymology of *indhlozi* and *itongo*, employed to designate the ancestor-gods, is also unknown, which is a pity, as it would have been interesting to see if the stem from which they come also means above. Is it not strange that in these three closely-connected languages the terms used for the spirits, about which they have exactly the same ideas, are absolutely without any linguistic relation? In Sutho, these spirits belong to the class "mu-ba," the class of persons, which seems natural. In Zulu their two names are of the class yin-tin and dji-ma, respectively ; in Thonga they belong to the shi-psi class. This dissimilarity is indeed curious.

2) Categories of Ancestor-Gods.

Since every human being becomes a shikwembu after death, there are consequently many categories of these. What is the fate of little children? If they die in infancy no religious ceremony is performed over their grave, nor are any prayers offered to them. The twig rite (I. p. 142) only begins for children who have died at the age of puberty. Infants are, however, seen in the sacred woods amongst the adult gods. This is one of the points about

(1) The Vendas call the ancestor-gods *badzimo*, which is evidently the same word as the Sutho badimo. The Rev. Th. Schwellnus told me he thought that the etymology of this word was the verb dzima (in Thonga tima) which means to extinguish (Timula tora means to quench the thirst). The badzimo would thus be those who bring relief, who remove anguish. As this stem dzimo under various forms is widespread amongst the Bantu tribes to designate the ancestor-gods, it would be interesting to know if the corresponding verb dzima also exists and if this etymology is clearly established. The word *ntimu*, sacred wood, in Thonga, may perhaps come from the same root.

776 which there is no very clear explanation ; doubtless the matter did
769 not seem worthy of inquiry!

The two great categories of gods are *those of the family*, and *those of the country*, the latter being those of the reigning family. They do not differ as regards their nature. In national calamities those of the country are invoked, whilst, for purely family matters, those of the family are called upon.

769 Moreover, each family has two sets of gods, those *on the father's*
776 *side* and *those on the mother's*, those of "kweru" and those of "bakokwana" (I. p. 268). They are equal in dignity. Both can
602 be invoked, and the divinatory bones are always called on to decide to which the offering must be made. It would seem, however, as if the gods of the mother's side were more tender-hearted and more popular than those of the father's. The reason for this is, perhaps, that relations are easier with the family of the mother than with that of the father. It is also just possible that it is a relic of the matriarchal period, when the ancestors of the mother alone were known, and consequently invoked. At any rate, the part played by batukulu nephews in the offerings shows that they are the true representatives of the gods, not of those of their father, but of their mother.

776 Two other categories of gods, which I have sometimes heard
769 mentioned, are the *Gods of assagais* (psikwembu psa matlhari) and *the Gods of bitterness* (psa shibiti). The former are those who
766 have been killed in battle ; the latter are those who have been drowned, killed by a wild beast, or who have committed suicide, or the pregnant woman who has been buried without being cut open (I. p. 166). In most of these cases, as is evident, the corpse has not been buried with the due rites and ceremonies ; the deceased has not been properly cared for : hence his bitterness ; or, as in the case of the pregnant woman, something has been buried without having first breathed its last breath (I. p. 140). In the case of the suicide, the poor man who hanged himself was full of sadness : "The great bitterness is the rope", said Mboza. In most of these cases no one was present at the death! These gods are therefore angry, and are the most to be feared.

000 The *Gods of the Bush, Psikwembu psa Nhoba*, are also especially

The Gods of the Bush, Psikwembu psa Nhoba, are also especially dreaded. There is a little song which is sung as a welcome to travellers who reach their home safely : 776 484 533

Shikwembu sha nhoba shi etlele !
Shi etlele, banhwanyana !
Amadikeo-dikeo-dikeo !
The god of the bush has remained asleep !
He has remained asleep, young girls !
Hurrah ! hurrah ! hurrah !

The spirits of the departed who wander about in the bush, not having been properly buried, try to attack innocent travellers. You are fortunate to escape their anger! For this reason they often say to a relative who is starting out on a journey : "Go with your god," viz., the special ancestor-god who can protect you against the dangers of the bush. 769 776 784

I have also heard mention of *Shikwembu sha tihanye*, the god of quarrels. When an offering prescribed by the bones and presented to a certain ancestor-god has not had the desired result, people say : "This god is a god of quarrels. Let us make an offering to the others so that they may scold him." 776 769

3) The Abode of the Ancestor-Gods and their Mode of Life.

Ideas on these two points are very confused, even contradictory. Some say that the departed go to a great village *under the earth*, a village where everything is white (or pure, "ku basa") ; there they till the fields, reap great harvests, and live in abundance, and they take of this abundance to give to their descendants on earth. They have also a great many cattle. The place where they live seems to be a kind of Hades or Paradise (1). But it would seem, when we consider the funeral rites, that the deceased, on the contrary, 775 776 787

(1) The Ba-Ila (see Smith and Dale, *The Ila-speaking people*, II p. 119) believe that the ghosts go *Kwiwe*, to the East, to Chilenga, the Creator. But they have the same contradictory ideas as the Thongas concerning the abode of their deceased ancestors. 171

Amongst the Natives of Barotseland, on the Zambezi, it is said that the dead go to Nyambe, the God of Heaven. They pierce the lobe of their ears and make other incisions in their bodies as a sign that they belong to Nyambe. When they die and reach the end of the earth at the great river Walamba (the Styx of the Zambezian tribes) the ferryman who conveys the dead to the other bank looks at them to see if

775 776 787 remains *in his grave*. Is not his grave his house (I. p. 137)? Does he not sit on his square, where his mats have been unrolled? Thus the life of the shikwembu seems to be the exact continuation of his earthly existence. That such is the idea is proved by the two bones which represent the gods in the set of divinatory bones : 1) the astragalus or nail of an ant-bear, because ant-bears live in the earth, and come out only during the night ; 2) the astragalus of an antelope, found in the excrement of a hyena ; the hyena ate the antelope, and swallowed the bone, which came to light again ; in the same way the gods have been buried in the ground, and reveal themselves later on. (Compare Ch. III. D.) A third idea, more or less intermediate between the other two, is that the gods reside *in the sacred woods*, and there lead their family life in human form, parents and children, even little children, who are carried on their mothers'shoulders. Mboza went so far as to say that they are married and bring forth children, as children are seen on their mothers'backs. Here again, we find the life of the other world regarded as the exact reproduction of this terrestrial existence.

4) The Sacred Woods.

764 769 778 These are vast, almost impenetrable thickets, in which the ancient chiefs have been buried ; they are called *ntimu*, (mu-mi) cemeteries. Every clan owns one or more of these burying places. The ntimu is reserved for the men of the royal family, those who have been the owners of the land. They are buried in different sections of the forest, "according to their villages," in such a way that the wood represents separate cemeteries, corresponding to the

171 they bear the marks, and only in that case does he take them to Nyambe (See *Ames primitives*, Th. Burnier, Paris Mission, 102, Boulevard Arago).

The Ba-Chopi believe that their ancestor-gods dwell in rivers. They have no fear of the graves where the deceased have been buried, and even till the ground over them, asserting that the bones alone remain in the earth, the ghosts themselves having departed into the river where they are heard singing, dancing, and playing on antelope horns. When the chiefs make a national offering, they mix the meat with water when they present it to their gods, and the one officiating turns his eyes towards the river when he prays. He places the part of the victim which has been cut out for the gods on the bank of the river, and everybody goes home. The gods come when all have gone and take the offering. It is taboo to remain on the spot and to be seen by them!

villages of the living. No woman, and no uterine nephew is buried in the official cemeteries. 764 769 778

These woods are taboo. It is forbidden to gather fuel there, to cut down any tree, or to allow the bush fire to enter them. Should anyone have imprudently set fire to the grass in the neighbourhood, and be unable to extinguish the blaze, and should the fire thus pass over a grave, he must provide a goat for sacrifice, in order to "extinguish" (timula) the sacred wood. All entry is strictly prohibited except to the guardian of the wood (mutameli wa ntimu), the priest, who is the descendant of the gods of the forest. He goes there from time to time, to offer the sacrifices. He penetrates into the dense foliage by a narrow path, hardly perceptible. I have often visited one of the most celebrated woods, that of Libombo, two miles east of the Rikatla station. The old Libombo chiefs were buried there, and Nkolele, the proprietor of the forest, was very proud of it. He asserted that Mahazule, the chief of Nondwane, belonging to the reigning family of Mazwaya, whose forefathers had conquered the land of Nondwane, feared the spot and, in order to avoid it, took a circuitous route to Lourenço-Marques, or, if forced to take that road, stopped near the wood to pay his respects to the old chiefs buried there. I did not see anything remarkable in that wood. Forcing my way through the bushes, brambles, and creepers I at length came to a sort of tumulus, but very slightly raised, on which were to be seen some dried leaves of maize, the remains of offerings placed there some time previously. The young man who acted as my guide — considerably against his inclination, I fancy, — turned away his face, with a terrified expression, when we came upon this grave. In another spot I found some other tombs. Snakes thrive, naturally, in these thickets, where they are undisturbed, but I did not see any on that occasion. No mausoleum has been built over any of these venerated sepulchres ; a few pieces of old blackened pottery were all we saw — the remnants of the jugs and plates belonging to the deceased, which were broken on the spot after his death.

The dread in which these sacred woods are held by the Natives is certainly not due to any unusual objects they may have seen 769 778 538

769 778 538 776 there. It is inculcated, and kept alive, by the truly terrifying tales which are told concerning them. These are related in the evening, in low tones, and with frightened looks, and the feeling of awe is fed and maintained by these legends. I intend to narrate here those I heard from various informants ; these stories will illustrate better than any philosophical explanation the ideas of the Natives concerning their gods. Those connected with the Libombo wood are the most typical. I owe them to Spoon and the aged Nkolele. I will begin with those which are of most ancient origin, and whose legendary character is most unmistakable.

539 776 769 One day a woman was passing close by the forest of Libombo : she plucked a sala (p. 16) from a tree and ate it, after which she went to till her garden. On another occasion, just as she was cracking another sala against the trunk of a tree before eating it, she saw that the fruit, instead of having a stone inside, was filled with small vipers. She threw it away, but the vipers said to her : "Go on! Eat away! Haven't we seen you every day picking sala? And these sala are ours, and not yours. What shall we gods have to eat? Have we not made this tree to grow?" And she went home and died, because she had been cursed by the gods.

Another woman was passing by the forest on a rainy day, and saw a child, who had climbed a tree, and was eating berries. She approached the child and said : "Give me some of those berries!" The boy made no reply, so she began to pick some for herself. When she had picked enough, she said : "Are you going on picking berries in such a rain as this! Where is your mother?" He still remained silent. She felt sorry for the child, thinking he was indeed to be pitied : — "Come," said she, "and let me carry you on my back." So she went up to the tree, and lifted down the child, and tied him on her back with her shawl ; then, putting her conical basket on her head, she started for home. On arriving at her hut, she saw that a fire had been lighted on account of the rain. — "Put on some more wood," said she, "for the sake of this little one, whom I found on the road eating berries." She untied the shawl, and tried to place the child on her hips, but he refused to be moved, and clung to her back, where he kept quite still. The folks said to the woman : "Put him down on the ground, so that he can go and warm himself near the embers." He refused. Then they said to him : "Get down!" But he still refused to move. Then the villagers said to the woman : "Didn't you pass by the Libombo forest?" — "Yes! I did," she replied, "and there I found this child gathering berries, and

brought him along with me." — "This is no child! It is a god!" they cried ; "a child never has a hard head like this one has. And look at his legs! What strength! How ever did you come to think it was a child?" —"But," said she, "I certainly thought it was a child — and can it be a god?" — They sent for magicians, who threw the bones. At once the magicians knew what was wrong : — "Ha! Hé! You found him at Libombo, did you not?" They tried to remove him by force, but he clung still more closely to the woman's back, stiffening his legs round her waist, and his arms around her neck. They tried to unclench his hands, but it was impossible! Then they begged her to go back to Libombo, and implore the owners of the forest to set her free from this child. She took her basket, and returned to the tree where she had found him. The guardian of the forest soon appeared. It was Makundju, the ancestor of Nkolele. He inveighed against the woman and those who accompanied her, saying : — "When you find fruit in the forest, do not pick it! If it be maize, leave it alone, or, if you pick it, spare at least one ear. If your chicken flies into the wood, do not go after it. If your goat runs away into it, you must not follow it. We are worn out, we folks of Libombo, with offering sacrifices for you passers-by... Your troubles are the consequences of the sins (psihono) you commit in this place." A white hen was caught, and sacrificed on behalf of the woman. Emitting the "tsu" the priest said : "Behold our ox, by which we present our petition. Let this god leave her back. She did not do it on purpose. She thought it was a child ; she did not know it was a god. Which way can people go henceforth if you, gods, put obstacles in the way?" While this sacrifice was being offered, the being suddenly left her back, disappeared, and no one knew how, or whither he went. As for the woman, she trembled violently and died... 539 776 769

A man once defied the prohibition of cutting dry wood in the forest. Suddenly he was pelted from behind with kwakwa and sala fruits. It was the gods. He tried to fly, but was unable to find the path out of the thicket. He was lost, and tired of wandering about he let his bundle of faggots fall. Then the gods allowed him to find his way out again, but, when he found himself in the open, he perceived that he was carrying nothing, even his axe had been taken from him.

Sometimes the gods made themselves heard ; when they were especially happy they played on trumpets, sang and danced. Passers-by often tried to get a glimpse of them, but the noise 776 778

It is said that, in olden days, there was an anchor there, and before sacrificing, the priest always used to lift it up, and let it fall to the ground, saying: "Shawan! (I salute thee) Tembe!" If the sacrifice was acceptable the sound of a trumpet: "bvé... bvé...," was heard, far away in the depths of the woods, but no form was ever seen. This anchor also possessed extraordinary powers. When the country was at war with its neighbours, and matters did not go well with Tembe, the anchor would move off by itself into the Matjolo district. This was the portent of some terrible catastrophe! 776 778

No one ever penetrated very far into the sacred wood of Tiyini, of the Matjolo clan, for it was said that any one doing so would be lost, and unable to find his way out. When the people of Matjolo were in need of rain, they took a young man of the country into the wood, and there abandoned him. The gods accepted their offering, and the young man, struck with paralysis, was unable to follow in their retreat those who had led him to martyrdom! He saw them going away, but remained behind to be devoured by the gods. The others hastened to sacrifice and returned home; they were forbidden to look behind them. Once home, they told how they had seen on the ground, in the wood, foot-prints of adults, and even of little ones who must have been old enough to crawl on their hands and knees! Often, they say, they brought back the rain with them! [789]

According to all these stories, it is evident that, in the Thonga mind, the ancestor-gods dwell in the sacred woods, and lead a life there in the earth, and occasionally outside, very similar to the terrestrial one. Mankhelu had, however, another idea, which is difficult to reconcile with this representation. On his forked magic pole he had a long shining grey branch of a climbing shrub called *ñwabola*. This has enormous thorns, which are supposed to have the power of calling the precious things which are far away, and of gathering them in the hut: money, oxen, girls to marry, etc., and also the ancestor-gods: "When they pass through the country, coming from our old domicile, near the Limpopo, they are caught by the thorns, and settle here to bless us." This idea that the gods fly through the air, is very rarely met 769 776 778 789 769 776

769 with. I never heard it said that the gods were in heaven, not-
776 withstanding the Sutho term badimo, which is believed by some to mean those who are above.

5. Relations between Ancestor-gods and their living descendants.

769 The apparitions of ancestor-gods in a human form in the
776 sacred woods are not of frequent occurrence. The gods reveal
825 themselves to their descendants by other and more common
753 means ; first, by their appearance *in the form of animals*, such as the Mantis (p. 335) or more often as little bluish green snakes called *shihundje* (p. 340). These charming and harmless reptiles are frequently seen in the huts, crawling in the thatch of the roof, or along the reeds of the walls (1). Natives never touch them, thinking that they are some of their gods who have come to pay them a visit. It is taboo to kill them. If a disease breaks out in the village the bones may reveal that some one in the hut has hurt the gods, and a sacrifice will be required in order to appease them. They also appear in the form of the large grey puff-adder (shiphyahla) (2).

769 Secondly, the ancestor-gods communicate with the living
776 *in their dreams*. If some one dreams of one of his dead relatives,
787 he is very much frightened, and consults the bones, in order

769 (1) This is the story which I heard from one of my informants of the Khosen
825 country : All his family was once assembled together for a marriage feast. The people were playing on the village square and enjoying themselves. The old women had remained in the hut, and suddenly they saw two little green snakes crawling along the reeds of the wall. They were much afraid, and at once called the headman. He came in, saw the snakes, and said : "Do not fear ! These are our ancestor-gods ! They have come to share in our feast."

(2) Describing to me a sacrifice at which he officiated either in September or October 1895, the old priest Nkolele told me as a fact the following story, which I will now quote word for word :

"I myself went into the wood with the offering I had prepared for the gods, and then *it came out*. It was a snake ; it was the father of Makundju, the Master of the Forest, Mombo-wa-ndlopfu, Elephant's-Face. He came out and circled round all those present. The women rushed away terrified. But he had only come to thank us. He didn't come to bite us. He thanked us saying : 'Thank you ! Thank you ! So you are still there, my children ! You came to load me with presents, and to

to know exactly what the god desires of him (Viguet). If the apparition was painful, if the god came as an enemy, fighting, the dreamer, when he awakes, will take some tobacco, or a small piece of cloth, and hang it somewhere in the reeds of the wall, near the door, as an offering. Or possibly the god has ordered him to give him something to drink. He will then buy a bottle of ginor wine, and pour a little outside the door ; whatever remains he will drink with his companions. If the dream takes place during a journey and the ancestor-god seems to be happy, the traveller will throw some tobacco on the ground when he awakes and say : "I had prayed thee to help me on my road ; thou hast come indeed! Help me to go further." But if the ancestor-god has an angry look and tells him : "Why do you not give me a piece of calico print? You have forgotten me"—the traveller will fetch a piece and tie it round a tree and say : "When I return home after making money, I will give thee some."

But the great means by which the will of the gods is revealed is the *set of divinatory bones*, which are cast on every occasion, and are called the "Bula," the Word. Does this mean the Word of the gods? Not precisely, but in most cases the diviner thinks he owes his divinatory power to a dead relative, who used to cast lots himself, and who transmitted his spirit of interpretation to him. Whatever may be the real explanation, the fact remains that it is by means of the bones that Thongas believe they know what their gods think and wish, and this is the reason, as we shall

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bring me fruit! T'is well!' — He came to thank us for our chicken. Even if one only kills a chicken, he is quite content. For him, it has just the same value as an ox. It was an enormous viper, as thick as my leg, down there (he pointed to his ankle). It came close up to me, and kept quite still, never biting me. I looked at it. It said : 'Thank you! So you are still there, my grandson!'"

— "But," said I to Nkolele, "what you are telling me, is it really fact, or just fancy?"

— "Undoubted fact! These are great truths! After that I prayed, and said : 'Thou, Mombo-wa-Ndlopfu, the Master of this land, thou who hast given it to thy son Makundju ; Makundju gave it to his son Hati ; Hati gave it to Makhumbi ; Makhumbi gave it to Kinini ; Kinini gave it to Mikabyana ; Mikabyana gave it to Mawatle... (Ma'watle gave it to me, his son' is here understood)... Look upon my offering. Is it not a beautiful one? And here am I, left all alone. If I had not brought this with me, who would have given you anything? Is it not just so? I ask of thee, my ancestor, I ask of thee all the trees ; the palm trees for building, the trunks which can be hollowed out for canoes ; and let it be that these trunks shall not fall on the people and crush them, when they go to cut them down, even those in the marsh.'"

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787 see, why divination plays such an important part in their life.
769 It is of the utmost importance to know what their gods think
776 and do, as the very existence of the village, and of the clan, and the welfare of every member of the clan depends on them. Is not Lukwembo, Divinity "the power of killing or of making alive, of enriching or of making poor?" Natives believe firmly in these two opposite actions of their gods. They are the masters of everything : earth, fields, trees, rain, men, children, even of baloyi, wizards! They have full control over all these objects or persons.

769 The gods can *bless* : if the trees bear plenty of fruit, it is because
776 they have made it grow (I. p. 414) ; if the crops are plentiful,
777 it is because they forced wizards to increase them, or hindered them from spoiling them (I. p. 396) ; if you come across a pot of palm wine, it is your god who has sent you that windfall (p. 44). When Mboza escaped from the Morakwen battle, one of his relatives exclaimed on his return home : "The gods of Makaneta have still been with you!" (Psikwembu psa ka Makaneta psa ha ku yimelele.) Often when a man has narrowly escaped drowning, or spraining his ankle on a stump which has caught his foot, he will say : "The gods have saved me."

769 But they can also *curse*, and bring untold misfortune on their
776 descendants. If the rain fails, it is owing to their anger ; if a tree
789 falls on you, they have directed its fall ; if a crocodile bites you, the
753 gods have sent it ; if your child has fever and is delirious, they are in him, tormenting his soul ; if your wife is sterile, they have prevented her from childbearing ; perhaps the gods of your mother have done this, because you had not given your maternal uncle the *tjhumba* part of the lobolo, which he has the right to claim (I. p. 267) ; in fact any disease, any calamity may come from them. There are, of course, other sources of misfortune : the baloyi, for instance, or Heaven, and the bones will show who has caused the mischief ; but the ancestor-gods are certainly the most powerful spiritual agency acting on man's life. Hence the necessity of propitiating them by prayers and sacrifices.

II. *The Means of Propitiation. Offerings and Sacrifices.*

It is no wonder, since these spirits are so terrible, that their descendants have sought means of propitiating them. The study of these rites is very interesting, and will throw more light on the ideas of the Bantus concerning their ancestor-gods. Some of these means of propitiation bear a magical character. For instance, when Mankhelu wished to induce the gods to sleep and leave him in peace, he took roots which had been brought to light naturally by a swollen river that had washed away the ground. The reason is clear ; the gods are in the earth, therefore things found in the earth can influence them. So he cut these roots in small pieces, cooked them with the flesh of a goat, and drank the broth ; the assagai which killed the goat had been first smeared with a powder made of these roots. He fastened the astragalus of the goat on his ankle, on the right side if the god to be propitiated belonged to his father's family, and on the left if it was one of his mother's ancestors. If the propitiatory ceremony was performed for a woman, the astragalus was tied with a strap "en bandouillère" round her body.

We shall often see such *magic acts* performed in the ancestor worship of the Thongas. This is in keeping with their general conception of Nature, as already explained (p. 369), and with the magic principles or axioms of primitive mentality. But to the magic element is added the religious ; the officiant is aware that he intends to influence living, conscious and superior beings, therefore he has recourse above all to specifically *religious means*, viz., to offerings and prayers. He presents to his gods what he calls a *mhamba*, and not *miri*, charms or medicines similar to those employed in magic proper. We shall understand more fully what the word mhamba means when we have described the various kinds of offerings.

1) Classification of Offerings.

These offerings are much more complicated and varied than they at first seem. The following principles of classification may be applied to them :

782 their protection : "May the harvest be plentiful ; may the cattle multiply ; may all our wives become pregnant." He uses by preference negative expressions : "Be not angry against us ; may the cows not slip their calves ; may our wives have no miscarriages, etc." In the meantime the people continue the same clapping of hands (called ku diya or ku losa gupsi, gupsi expressing exactly the hollow sound produced by the curved hands).

Notwithstanding this ritual clapping of hands, not much respect is shown by those present. They chat and joke whilst the chief of the clan is praying. A little tobacco has been spread as a libation on the graves and all help themselves to it. The influence of European ideas can be noticed ; a man cries : "Take off your hats!" and most of the men obey, showing that they are conscious that this is a religious ceremony worthy of respect.

As soon as the ceremony is over, they begin to dance. Immediately the clapping changes. It is now done with the hands held flat. It is chiefly the women, especially the old ones, who dance. Gabaze, the principal wife of the Nkuna chief Muhlaba, who is a Makaringe, the sister of Mugwaleni, makes herself conspicuous by her contortions. These are the ordinary dances.

They eat the roasted meat ; they drink the beer brought by the women. The portions offered to the manes are eaten as well as the rest, and I did not observe that they were reserved to special persons. The skin of the victim is cut into small strips which the men tie round the right wrist, the women round the left."

b) *National Offerings.*

782 These are those offered at the capital, to the ancestors of the
769 chief, but on behalf of the whole clan, because the gods of the
796 reigning family have control over the clan, just as the chief has
554 over the families of his subjects.

The regular national offering is the *luma* of the first fruits, their consecration, which I have described at length as one of the principal manifestations of the National life (I. p. 396-406). The Bantu conception of hierarchy is clearly illustrated by this custom : the gods must be the first to enjoy the produce of the new year, then the chief, the sub-chiefs, the counsellors, the

782 headmen, then the younger brothers in order of age. There
769 is a stringent taboo directed against the person who precedes
796 his superiors in the enjoyment of the first fruits, this law being
554 applicable to Kafir corn or bukanye in certain clans, and also to sorghum, pumpkin leaves and beer, etc., in others (1).

834 The sexual taboo is also enforced. Those who contravene this
782 law are said to "destroy the efficacity of the offering, nyumbisa mhamba." At the Ngoni Court, where sexual excesses were prevalent (see I. Annotatio 14) it is said that the chiefs used to remain continent for a fortnight at the time of luma. The reason of this taboo is probably the fact that the luma signifies the entering upon a new year, a new season, and is thus a rite of passage.

782 The religious meaning of the rite is clear : the gods, if deprived of the right they possess by virtue of their hierarchical position, would avenge themselves by threatening the harvest ; so they must be given their share first.

In the Maluleke clan, in which the customs seem to have been influenced by the Ba-Nyai, there is also a regular offering at the capital, when *the crops are still growing*. Rangane describes it as follows : "When the chief sees that the Kafir corn is threatened by the vermin in the fields, he says : "Perhaps the masters of the country (i. e. my ancestors who are dead) are angry ; perhaps I have not worshipped them fittingly." He summons the sons of the royal family (mangalakana) from all parts of the country, prepares beer, and selects a goat for the sacrifice ; they assemble around the graves with the sons and the uterine nephews, where they worship, and then, after eating all that is to be eaten, they return."

The special national offerings are those in connection with rain. If the rain falls at the right season, the sacrifice will not be made ; but should it fail to do so, the whole ritual will be gone through. This sacrifice for rain, is, as has already been mentioned (p. 318) called *phokolo* amongst the Bilen clans, and is performed in the

(1) Amongst the Malulekes a *second luma* is necessary after harvest, when brewing the first beer. It seems that the sub-chiefs or even headmen, settled in districts far away from the capital, can obtain a special license to perform the luma ceremony on their own account, but they must first apply for this permission, and after having finished, they must forward the chief's share to him.

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

2) The Main Elements of Ancestor Worship.

The sequence of the religious ceremonies in a typical sacrifice, like that performed at the crushing of the hut, is as follows : 769 782

1) The bones are first consulted, and reveal to what god, when, how, and by whom the sacrifice must be made.

2) The officiant, who is as a rule the eldest male member of the family, comes and presides over the sacrifice.

3) The victims are brought by those who have either been designated, or who have volunteered to provide them.

4) They are killed by the uterine nephews, the goats or sheep by piercing the heart, the hens by cutting the throat. Sometimes the face of the goat is directed to a certain point of the horizon.

5) The victim bleats, or if it is a hen, jumps about on the ground in its agony. At each thrust of the assagay, or of the

order to secure this much desired object as soon as possible, the son would go so far as to poison his father. Now, according to the testimony of Mr. F. Grébert (*Au Gabon*, p. 154), the byeri is not necessarily the skull of an ancestor. Any skull can be used, either that of a traveller found dead on the caravan route or even the skull of a man belonging to a foreign clan who has been assassinated. The byeri, whatever may be its origin, acts by its own power and no longer on account of its connection with the spirit of an ancestor. It is a true fetish, a material, magical object which is able to kill or to enrich in virtue of its own power. The Thonga mhamba is not a fetish. Its power is never dissociated from the spirits of the old chiefs whose nails, hair or faces have been used to produce it. Whatever action it may have is due to the fact that these nails, hair or faces influence the dead chiefs to whom they belonged, according to the magic principle that the part acts on the whole. The origin of the byeri is certainly ancestor worship, but here ancestrolatry has evolved into fetichism, and I conclude from these facts that Thonga ancestrolatry is simpler, more spiritualistic and must therefore be more ancient than the present Pahuin system. 171 778

Amongst the Ba-Ganda (see Rev. J. Roscoe, *the Baganda*) there are powerful gods who have their priests and mediums, and are worshipped according to a complicated ritual, one of them being the war-god Kibuka. They have their temples, in which there is a sacred shrine placed on a stool. The shrine of Kibuka was secured and sent to the Museum of Ethnology at Cambridge, and it was found to contain, together with other objects, a bag with a human jawbone, the male organ and a decorated umbilical cord. This is a proof that the god Kibuka is an ancestor-god, whatever may be the splendour to which his worship has attained in the course of time. And here again we are in presence of what seems to be a later form of ancestrolatry, most probably evolved in consequence of the development of the social system of the Baganda. They form a nation with a powerful royal family, more than one thousand years old. With them the spirits of the dead kings hover round their jawbones, just as they are influenced by their nails, hair or faces amongst the Thongas, who would seem to be in a less advanced stage of evolution.

782 knife, the uterine nephews utter their cries of joy (1). This
769 is their way of consenting (pfumela) or answering, for they accept the offering on behalf of the gods (2). The whole crowd joins in these manifestations of joy.

6) The victim is cut open, and one limb, or small pieces of each limb, are put aside for the gods ; the half digested grass, *psanyi*, found in the intestines, especially in the *shihlakahla* stomach, is carefully put aside.

7) The priest takes a little of the psanyi mixed with the blood of the victim, puts it to his lips, emits a little saliva, and spits out the whole, pronouncing the *tsu*, this being the means of consecrating the offering, or, as we may say, despatching it to the gods.

8) He pronounces the prayer — occasionally interrupted by some member of the family, who has a complaint to make.

9) In certain cases of special misfortune, whilst praying he squeezes the green liquid contained in the psanyi over his hearers, who rub their bodies with it.

10) One of the nephews "cuts his prayer" (i. e. brings it to an end) by taking in his mouth a little of the consecrated beer or wine, or part of the hen's gizzard.

11) The uterine nephews steal the offering and run away, followed by the throng, who throw pellets of psanyi at them. They eat the portion of the gods.

12) Should the offering have been made on behalf of a particular individual, the astragalus of the goat, or some portions of the hen are tied to him and worn for a time on the left or right side of the body : the left if the offering was made to the maternal ancestors, the right if it was made to the paternal gods.

Let us examine more closely some of these acts, so that we may better understand the elements of this ceremony.

(1) Amongst the Ba Nyai they clap their hands and shout : "Ndiyo !" — "all right."

782 (2) It is not necessary to add more about the part played by the uterine nephews in
604 the sacrifice, for it has been explained in detail in Vol. I, p. 269 when treating of the family system. The two great reasons for their taking such a prominent part in the religious ritual seem to be the following : 1) during the life of their maternal uncle, and also of all their mother's family, they were on very intimate terms with them, "even eating from the same piece of food, not fearing their saliva." Therefore they now eat the flesh of the victim instead of the ancestor-gods of their mother. 2) Maternal relatives have a special religious duty towards their nephews. They act as their priests

gatherings, after a death, the elder brother entreats the gods to bless the family, to prevent bad feeling, or strife, to give wisdom and strength to the new headman, that he may be successful in his rule over the village (1). 782

When some great misfortune is the occasion for this religious act being performed, the petition is preceded, or followed, by a regular *insulting* of the gods. There are two words used to designate this curious part of the prayer : *holobela*, or *holobisa*, to scold the gods, or *rukatela*, the actual word for "to insult." There is an instance of this strangely impertinent manner of addressing the gods in the sacrifice for the sick nephew (p. 396). These insults are generally uttered while the priest is squeezing the psanyi over the shoulders of his subordinates.

The last part of the prayer is *its sudden termination*, when one of the uterine nephews puts a portion of the victim into the officiant's mouth, thus "cutting his oration" (tjema). This is a true part of the ritual. When the victim is a hen, it is the gizzard, which has been half roasted during the long prayer, that is used for this purpose. The priest eats it, and so is the first to partake of the flesh of the offering.

Prayers to the ancestors do not show very much religious feeling, and are, at any rate, absolutely devoid of awe. Whilst 782 769

(1) *Music* plays no part in Thonga religious ritual. During the preparation of the offering those present often sing, but these songs are those which accompany the ordinary dances and bear no religious character. I only once heard of a true sacred chant. Mungomane, the distinguished dancer and musician who made his living by the exercise of his art in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques (p. 187) told me that when he presided over the worship in his village, he used to *sing his prayer*. He gave me the words, but unfortunately not the notes. They are worth quoting : 781 533 776

"Let the meat not stick in your throats ! Eat, you chiefs, you ancestor-gods... They are coming (the oxen) ; they see me, whilst I mourn you, my father and my mother, whilst I remain outside, where I receive life from you, who are below ; I remain, I am a miserable wretch.

"The oxen are slain ! Slay the oxen ! Here they are. I mourn you. Let us eat them together, you father and mother. Give me life and give it also to my children. Let us eat these oxen which I possess, but I possess them for you. Let us not suffer from complaints of the chest here in our home.

"This is the song by which we accompany you, as you return below. Let us remain in good health."

At a given moment the uterine nephew answered by saying :

"I magnify you, my father ! You shall see me, father and mother !"

And all those present, seeing that they would have plenty of meat to eat, joined in a chorus of praise, clapping their hands.

782 sacrificing, the Natives laugh, talk in loud tones, dance, sing
769 obscene songs, even interrupt the prayer with their remarks,
781 and insult each other about family matters. The officiant himself
533 sits on the seat designated by the bones, and speaks in a monoto-
nous manner, looking straight in front of him with utter indifference.
776 There is nothing in his demeanour which denotes fear. An exception must perhaps be made in the case of those members of the Makaringe family who clapped their hands during the prayer in the same manner as when saluting "bakonwana" (p. 402). They have as much respect for the ancestor-gods as for their relatives-in-law, and that is, indeed, saying much. I have heard that in the Maputju country people kneel down during the prayer. In Nondwane women alone kneel, whilst the men sit on their heels, the customary attitude in worship (1). If the gods were actually old people, still living, they could not be addressed with more familiarity. This leads us finally to consider in what the divinity of the ancestor-gods consists.

d) The Divine Nature of the Ancestor-Gods.

776 I have brought together in a preceding paragraph (p. 372-386)
769 all that the Natives say about their gods. Now let us return to them, after having studied the religious ritual, and ask : What

(1) The Ma-Lemba, that curious tribe settled amongst the Thongas and Vendas of Spelonken which has certain Semitic customs (I p. 73) are much more respectful towards their ancestor-gods. They have prayer meetings at which the old men of many families assemble together ; one of them, he who knows the ancestors best, leads the others in prayer, "quoting all their mountains" viz. all the sacred hills where the ancestors have been buried, and at the end of each sentence they all answer : "hundjiii..." When the prayer is finished, they each raise an arm and say : "Amen !" This is one of the customs borrowed by them from the Semitic populations with which they came into contact in former times. When they heard Christians pronouncing the same word to conclude their prayers, they were very much astonished. One of them told me ; "This shows that we were Christians formerly and have become back-sliders." One of their formulae when praying is as follows. "You, so and so and so, help us and enable us to reach Mudzimu." Mudzimu is the name by which they designate the Supreme Being in whom they believe and of whom they say : "All that you eat, it is Mudzimu who gives it to you !" If a child refuses to obey, they say to him : "Mudzimu will see you !" For them the ancestor-gods are but intermediaries between themselves and Mudzimu. They often call themselves Basilamusi, Moslems, and claim that there were Moslems belonging to their tribes (A ba ri ba ka hina).

do all these ceremonies reveal as to the conceptions of the Thongas concerning the ancestral spirits which they worship? A striking contrast exists in their ideas. On the one hand, the ancestor-gods are *true gods*, endowed with the attributes of divinity, whilst, on the other, they seem to be merely *human beings*, exactly on the same level as their worshippers.

1) *They are divine!* When an old decrepit man or woman dies, he at once becomes a god : he has entered the domain of infinity. The Thongas have no very clear idea of infinity. They have, however, a technical term for it : "lepsi nga yiki helo (Dj.), or mbangu (Ro.)" — "that which does not reach the point where it ends." This idea has certainly been extented to the shades which have attained the rank of psikwembu. The psikwembu are *omnipresent*. As Mankelu says : "For them there is no such thing as distance (a psi na kule) ; they are everywhere present (psi kone hikwaku). They are like heaven, the sun and the moon. There is no place where it can be said that the moon is not." The notion of *omnipresence* is perhaps that which has been understood most clearly. *Omniscience* is also believed in : the gods know what their descendants do, though they may be separated from them, perhaps dwelling in distant lands. *Omnipotence* results from the fact that they control everything in the life of their descendants. They are superior to wizards in this respect. As regards their connection with Heaven, I have never heard the point discussed. Natives do not philosophise. Thus the ancestral spirits are true gods endowed with divine attributes.

2) *They are still, however, only men!* They are not transcendent beings before whom miserable sinners tremble and offer prayers. The attitude of the worshippers, which I have just described, the freedom they show in insulting their gods, indicates that they consider them as exactly on the same level as themselves. This human nature of the gods is clearly shown by two facts : the limits of their power and their want of moral character. The domain in which they exercise their power is limited, being only *that of their own family* ; they watch over their descendants, bless or punish them, but they are absolutely indifferent to other men, and do not trouble about their affairs more than they did when still alive

776 on earth. I have nothing to fear or to hope from my neighbour's
769 gods, if I do not belong to the same "shibongo" (I. p. 360). The gods of the royal family are invoked on behalf of the whole country, and have power to give rain to the land ; but it is the chief and his uncles who must approach and sacrifice to them. I have no right to do so. It is true that an exception seems to be made in the case of the gods of bitterness, or of the bush, who attack the traveller, although he belongs to another family. But this is indeed only an exceptional case, it being their kinsfolk, who neglected to bury them, who are most exposed to their wrath.

Another proof that they are men is this : although as gods they have acquired these divine ontological powers, they have made no real moral progress. They are not better than they were as men. Their *character* is that of suspicious old people, who resent any want of respect, or attention, on the part of their descendants. They wish to be thought of, and presented with offerings. It would seem that they are not actually in need of anything, for they live in abundance, but they exact a punctual observance of the duties of their descendants in regard to them. They must *luma*, eat the first fruits, and have their share of the tobacco leaves and also of the ground tobacco. They are jealous,
783 and avenge themselves when forgotten (1). The only sin which
769 seems to be deserving of punishment is to neglect them. There
776 are, however, two other faults which they strongly condemn, and for which they may even kill their descendants : the first is any serious *transgression against the law of hierarchy* (as we saw, when dealing with the sacrifice of reconciliation) ; they punish especially the young man, even though he be the chief, who dares thus to

539 (1) In a very interesting tale, which is unique, and which I owe to Camilla and have published in *Les Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, p. 264, we hear of the people of Mashaken, near Lourenço Marques forgetting for many years to make offerings to their gods. Famine ensues. The men go to the marsh to cut sugar canes. They are unable to break them, and the gods chase them away. The women, who come to a place where honey is flowing from a tree, try to take the combs, but their hands break off and remain fixed to the spot ! The bones order Sabulana, a young girl, to go to the sacred wood to sacrifice. She enters the forest and sees the gods assembled. They say to her : "Tell your people that they have sinned, because they have tilled the ground and harvested without presenting us with any offerings. Now we are glad, because they have come to invoke us." This story was told me as a tale, not as a legend of the sacred woods.

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encroach upon the right of the *regular priest*, which is a great taboo ; secondly, they kill a man who loses all restraint in sexual relations ; when any one yields to that sin, people say : "The gods will lead him into the thick bush and kill him there." To other sins they are quite indifferent. Mboza even asserted, with a sadness which reminded me of the complaints of Asaph in Ps. LXXII, that men of bad habits do not fall ill or meet with misfortune ; the cough only attacks the good ; wizards bewitch them and do not go to the bad fellows, "for the gods see that they are not worth anything!"

In conclusion, I should say that what is wanting in the conception of the ancestor-gods, as compared with the God of higher religions, is both transcendence and the moral attributes.

III. *General Characteristics of Ancestrolatry.*

If I had to characterise Thonga ancestrolatry, I would say :

It is a *spiritualistic* religion, in the sense that no idols are adored ; there is neither idolatry nor fetichism in it. Spirits and spirits alone are worshipped.

It is an *animistic* religion, as defined in the preceding chapter, the categories of spirit gods being numerous, and these spirits being worshipped in order to win their favour, and propitiated when they are angry.

Though consisting essentially of offerings and prayers, which are distinctly religious acts, *it is mingled with magic* to a considerable extent.

It is a *particularistic family* religion, each family having its own particular gods. We may also see in it the beginings of a *particularistic national* religion (the great mhamba).

It is a *social* religion, its prescriptions being aimed at keeping alive and strengthening the hierarchy, which is the main feature of the social order.

It is an *unsacerdotal* religion, there being no sacerdotal order, but at the same time the priesthood of the elder brother is strictly enforced.

It is a *non-moral* religion, by which I do not mean that it is *immoral*, i. e. opposed to the laws of morality, but that it has no, or at least very

diminutive of *Mulungu*, *balungu*, by which are designated, amongst the Zulus and Thongas, White people of every description, whether Europeans or Asiatics. Could the inhabitants of Heaven have been called "balungwana," on account of their resemblance to the Whites? It would hardly seem probable, for the name of the balungwana, and the ideas connected with them, were in existence long before White people were generally known, or had settled in the country. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the name of these mythical beings, as also that by which the Whites are designated, is a derivative of some other pre-existent term ; and what should this be if not the famous vocable "Mulungu," which stands for God, the One Supreme God, in so many of the Bantu dialects of East Africa, from Lake Victoria Nyanza to the Zambesi, to Senna and Quilimane? I should be inclined to think that the tribes in the neighbourhood of Delagoa were also acquainted with this name, which is so widely known, and that it has, in the course of centuries, disappeared from their theology, only leaving, as a last trace, the term balungwana, applied to the heavenly beings who occasionally descend to earth, and balungu, designating that superior race whose wisdom has always impressed the Blacks as supernatural. If this hypothesis were confirmed, we should have the right to conclude that the idea of Heaven, such as it is described in this chapter, is the disfigured remnant of a higher and monotheistic conception, held by the primitive Bantus before their dispersion, which has evolved in various ways amongst the different tribes.

II. *The Antiquity of Ancestrolatry.*

Ancestor Worship seems, on the other hand, to be an extremely ancient religion amongst mankind. There have been discovered of late years sepulchres of prehistoric date, which seem to show that the funeral rites of the first races were very similar to those practised by the Bantus of the present day. In comparing the burial of Sokis (I. p. 139) with that of a human being of the Mousterian age, whose remains were recently discovered by Hauser in the celebrated "Abri du Moustier" (Dordogne) (1) I noticed the following resemblances :

(1) See my paper "Deux enterrements à 20,000 ans de distance." *Anthropos*, 1900, I. v. Comp. also *L'homme préhistorique*. January, 1909.

171 769 1) In both cases, the corpse was treated with great, even affectionate care, protected against the earth, and provided with a pillow.

2) The legs and arms had been bent towards the body, a custom widespread amongst primitive races, and directly due to the belief in an after-life.

3) The deceased is regarded as sleeping : hence the pillow provided for him.

4) His after-life is believed to be an exact continuation of his existence on earth. Hence the fact that the articles which he was accustomed to use are put on to, or inside, his grave, the mats, rugs, mug in one case, and silex or "coups de poing" in the other.

5) If the rites performed for Sokis may be explained by the hypothesis that he has become a *shikwembu*, a god endowed with divine powers, if they are in truth acts of worship, it is but reasonable to suppose that the same religious conceptions gave birth to the similar rites of the Mousterian Primitives. The Mousterian Age is one of the first periods of the Quaternary. Some palaeontologists believe it to be anterior to the last glacial period, and think that the dwellers in la Dordogne lived 20,000, even 50,000 years ago! They possessed, then, a religion, and this religion was probably Ancestrolatry.

III. *The Relation between Ancestrolatry and the Conception of Heaven.*

769 792 776 The conclusion which may be drawn from the two preceding paragraphs is that both Ancestor Worship and the Conception of a Supreme Being are of very ancient date, and the question naturally arises as to which is the older. I do not pretend here to be able to supply a solution to this great problem, but merely to draw the attention of my readers to the following facts.

1) When questioned as to the relative antiquity of their two sets of religious ideas, Thongas reply that they are unable to give an answer. Their conception of Heaven is so impersonal that they cannot draw any comparison between the two. Their neighbours, the Swazis and the Zulus, however, are very decided upon this point. The Rev. W. Challis, in *The East and the West* of July, 1908, summarises their statements as follows :

"Long ago a great and noble Bantu king was in the habit of climbing a twin-peaked mountain at daybreak, there to intercede with the Great Great One (Unkulunkulu) on behalf of his people. His son, who succeeded him, was afraid to draw near to the Great God whom his father worshipped, so he called upon the spirit of his father to intercede for him and his people before the Creator of all. Gradually each head of a house adopted this method of approaching God, until each family had its own ancestral spirits as mediators first, then merely as beings who brought good or bad luck, and who needed to be propitiated by sacrifice and constant flattery and attention. But God is not in their thoughts now ; only a vague tradition among the old men survives as to the existence of the Great Great One." 769 772 776

The Zulus affirm, so Callaway says, that the same proceeding took place amongst their ancestors. This seems to be a phenomenon similar to the adoration of saints in medieval times, after a period when religion had had a much purer and more transcendental character.

2) A second fact, which points in the same direction, is the contrast which exists in the conception of the ancestral spirits. On the one hand they are but men, who may be insulted (as was often the case with the saints to whom reference has just been made ; take, for instance, the incident of the striking of the image of St Antony of Padua by a worshipper, because the saint had not helped him to recover some lost property) ; on the other hand they are endowed with the qualities of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence in their relations with their descendants. It would seem as if the idea of divinity, which was not originally connected with the spirits of the departed, had been applied to them in an awkward and merely external fashion.

3) It is wonderful to notice how easily the idea of the Christian God is accepted by the Bantus. They have scarcely any difficulty in believing that this is the real God to whom worship is due. Livingstone long ago remarked this, and the truth of it has been confirmed by Miss Kingsley, for one, in regard to the Northern Bantus, and also by most of those who have endeavoured to win over these tribes to Christianity. It seems as if one were telling them an old story, with which they had been quite familiar but had now half forgotten. In regard to the Thongas I believe the psychological process to be as follows. When they hear of the *Shikwembu*, who is *in Heaven*, there at once takes place in their minds a coalescence, or reunion of the two main characteristics of their two religions ; — their *shikwembu* is personal but not transcendental ; their *Heaven* is transcendental but not personal.

769 772 776 God, the real God who is preached to them, is both personal and transcendental; it is as if two different kinds of electricity suddenly came in contact with each other in their minds and produced a flash of light... The result is decisive. The two ideas can no longer be kept apart. When the Native has adopted the living God of Christianity, he either understands Him more and more fully, and is able to find great joy and satisfaction of soul in his new religion, or he abandons Him, and becomes godless, if he is unwilling to accept the morality of a true Christian life; he very seldom returns to Ancestrolatry, nor to his former deistic and naturalistic conceptions. This is another proof that the knowledge of the one and only God, who reigns over all, was indeed sleeping in his heart and conscience, no doubt as a result of the ancient monotheistic conceptions of the Bantus.

The evolution of mankind has been a long one! Even if the Bantus formerly had the idea of God, this would not go to prove anything as regards the primitive religion of humanity. This question is entirely beyond the range of the present work, and even Science may perhaps never be able to answer it. I can therefore leave it out of consideration.

My last observation has shown the caducity of the Thonga religion. It is not able to stand before the advance of the higher revealed religions, Mohammedanism and Christianity. Hence the facility with which Thongas are converted to one or other of these beliefs. This fact is of considerable importance in respect to the future of the tribe, and it will be necessary for us to consider it in our Conclusion.

(See also *Some additional remarks on the idea of the Supreme Being and on Ancestor-worship in relation to Religious History*. App. IV.)

APPENDIX III (See p. 428).

On Personal Religion amongst the Thongas.

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The following facts prove that though ancestor-worship is above all a collective and ritual affair, religious acts of a personal and individual character are not wanting.

A young man of the Hobyana family told me that when he was still a boy, he was employed by his father to convey travellers over the river in a boat. He was accused by his brothers of stealing the money paid to him for this service. His brothers did not like him; they took from him the money which he received from the travellers and accused him of keeping it for himself and of deceiving the owner of the boat. One evening, as he was returning home after his day's work, he heard a great noise in the village ; people were speaking of him in angry tones. A Portuguese official had passed through the country some time before and had shown him kindness. He decided to run away and seek refuge amongst the Whites. The night was pitch dark when he arrived on the borders of a great plain. He felt very lonely and was seized by a terrible fear of this great, empty space which he had to cross. Then "another heart" told him to pray to the ancestor-gods to help him in his anguish. He remembered how his father used to *hahla*, and thought of saying "tsu." But he did not dare to pronounce the sacramental syllable. A feeling of shame (tingana) prevented him from doing so. However, he kneeled down, put the parcel containing his clothes under his left arm, crossed his hands before his breast and joined them (fumbarela). He decided not to address his prayer to his paternal ancestors, those of the Hobyana family, as it was his father and his brothers who were ill-treating him, but rather to those of his mother. One of these maternal ancestors bore a special relation to him, as his parents had named him after this ancestor, who had died without posterity and whose name they wished to "revive" (pfusha) in this way. The boy prayed as follows : "You, my ancestor-god, after whom I have been named, save me and lead me where I am going." While pronouncing these words, he kept his eyes towards the East, where the moon was just rising, and, adds the boy, "I felt a great peace and joy in my heart and continued my journey."

Another boy of the Mashaba family, going for the first time to work in Johannesburg, was suddenly seized by fear in the railway carriage,

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remembering that he had been told that the mines were full of water and that boys working underground contracted fatal diseases. Overcome by the idea that he was going to his death, he jumped out of the train at the third station after Komati Poort and began to walk in the direction of Barberton through the desert. Feeling tired, he lay down and tried to sleep. But he heard antelopes running about quite near him, saying "mpfi! mpfi!" — "If these animals were hyenas," thought he, "I should be lost." Then the idea came to him that he ought to call upon the psikwembu to help him, which he did without pronouncing the official tsu, saying: "My gods! Help me! Save me from dangers and from wild beasts! Keep me alive!"

One of my pupils of the Khosa clan had a great affection for his mother. He said that she frequently prayed in her hut when he was sick, asking the psikwembu to heal him (p. 412). She used to offer them a little of a special mealie pap, prepared with particular care, and to throw a pinch of ground tobacco on the threshold of the hut in the morning. When she was tilling her garden and felt very tired and unwell, she used to pray "according to what her heart instructed her to say."

An Inhambane boy told me that, when travellers cross the Inharrime drift, many take a little water in their mouths, say tsu, and pray to their ancestor-gods to take care of them in this dangerous passage. Though his father and mother were still living and it is the custom not to hahla before their death, he said tsu, as the others did.

At the Morakwen drift the river Nkomati is very broad, and when the South wind begins to blow in fury the ferryman who rows travellers across to the opposite side runs great danger. One of his relatives told me that when this happens, he spits out a little saliva (as an offering of bitterness) and says: "Tsu! Do not hate me! These heads are not mine," meaning: "The children I convey do not belong to me, and I should have a great responsibility towards their parents if they perished in the river." Another witness assured me that this ferryman also begged all those in the canoe to join in his prayer and to entreat their own ancestor-gods to save them.

A Native of the Manyisa country added: "Individual prayer undoubtedly exists! During the heat of battle, a warrior, feeling himself in great danger, will kneel down, plant his shield in front of him and invoke his ancestor-gods. Some have remained in this position so long that the enemy have been able to stab them while they were still kneeling."

Such spontaneous appeals to the ancestor-gods do certainly occur,

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and this shows that ancestrolatry, notwithstanding its strongly ritualistic character, sometimes affords religious souls real help and relief. 781

When asked what they wish to obtain by their ancestor-worship, Thongas often answer : *Butomi*. This word comes from the adjective *ntomi*, to which is prefixed *bu*, the prefix of abstraction. *Ntomi* designates a man who is in good health, and butomi means above all *good health* ; but it has also a wider connotation and may well be translated by *life*. Life for the greater number is merely good health, plenty to eat, the possession of many children, material blessings ; but for the finer types it means something more ; it is the full happiness, to which they vaguely aspire and from which the moral element is not altogether absent. At least such is the impression I sometimes had when I heard them speak about butomi. 769

APPENDIX IV (See p. 450).

Additional Remarks on the idea of the Supreme Being and on Ancestor-worship amongst Bantus in relation to the History of Religion. 000

Much new light has been thrown of late years on the subject of the relation between ancestrolatry and the belief in a Supreme Being, a subject which remains one of the greatest problems of the History of Religion. In the paragraph which I devoted to this question in my first edition and which is reproduced in the second (p. 448), I refrained from attempting a definite solution of the problem of the order of priority of these two beliefs. I still believe that it is safer to maintain an attitude of reserve on the subject, as such a solution ought to take into account not only Bantus, of whom I know something, but the whole of primitive humanity. I should like only to add a few remarks which have been suggested to me by a comparison with some other Bantu tribes, and to put forward tentatively an explanation which may be applicable to the Bantu domain.

As already pointed out, the belief in a Supreme Being is found in various forms amongst all the Bantus, but it is perhaps nowhere more clearly defined than amongst the Ba-Ila, so minutely described by the Rev. Ed. W. Smith in his book, already quoted, on the Ba-Ila speaking people. *Leza* is designated by a number of typical praise-names : the Creator, the Moulder, the Constructor, the One who has no end, the Guardian the Giver, the One who gives and who causes to rot, the